

Civilian personnel system to become more flexible, responsive, page 8

Border Eagle

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That's hot...

Chip Faver, 47th Services Division director, and Chief Master Sgt. Ted Pilihos, 47th Flying Training Wing command chief, chow down as many jalapeno peppers as possible in 30 seconds during the Boss and Buddy Night contest Feb. 6 at Club Amistad. Mr. Faver won the contest by eating three and a half peppers.



Photo by 1st Lt. Lindsay Logsdon

'Force shaping' means some can leave active duty early

Compiled from staff reports

There is good news for thousands of airmen considering leaving active duty who thought they could not because of existing service obligations.

An effort dubbed "force shaping" is opening the exit doors to officers and enlisted servicemembers in select career fields and year groups by waiving some active-duty service commitments previously incurred for events like government-funded education, permanent changes of station and promotion.

Force shaping includes opportunities to transition to the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard, and can relieve some people of their active-duty service commitments.

Rules for leaving active duty early

will be the least restrictive for anyone wanting to transfer to the Guard or Reserve through the Palace Chase program.

Some bonus payback requirements may also be waived, officials said.

Applications for any of the force-shaping early release programs must be made through local military personnel flights by March 12.

More than 16,000 additional people – 12,700 enlisted and 3,900 officers – currently projected to leave will be allowed out to help the service return to its authorized active-duty force size by Sept. 30, 2005. The goal is to get within authorized end strength while avoiding "extreme measures" that "wreak havoc" with mission and morale, officials said.

Active-duty airmen wanting to transfer to the Reserve or Guard will be able to apply for a waiver of an active-duty service commitment regardless of their career field.

"We're a total force, and for our active-duty airmen who would like to separate early and still retain a connection to their Air Force, the Palace Chase program provides the perfect vehicle to preserve operational capability while reducing active-duty end strength," said Maj. Gen. John Speigel, the Air Force's director of personnel policy at the Pentagon.

"We're focusing a big part of our efforts there because it keeps (servicemembers) and their expertise

See **Force**, page 4

Newslines

Tops in Blue to perform

Tops in Blue will perform at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday in Del Rio at the Paul Poag Theatre for the Performing Arts.

Admission is free. Doors open for military I.D. cardholders at 6:45 p.m. and to the public at 7:15 p.m. Shuttle services are offered to the theater from the enlisted dormitories, Fiesta Center and Club Amistad.

For bus schedules, call 298-5474.

Retreat, graduation set

Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training class 04-05 will hold its retreat ceremony at 5 p.m. Thursday at the flagpole outside the Wing Headquarters Building. Graduation ceremonies will be held at 10 a.m. Feb. 20 in the Anderson Hall auditorium.

All base members are invited to attend.

Warrior call scheduled

A Warrior Call hosting Laughlin members and their families who have gone through a deployment in the last year is set for 3 p.m. Feb. 25 in the Anderson Hall auditorium.

All Team XL members are encouraged to attend.

Deployment stats

Deployed:	34
Returning in 30 days:	26
Deploying in 30 days:	6

Mission status

(As of Tuesday)

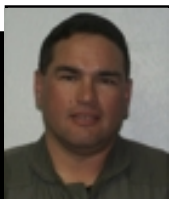
Days behind or ahead:

T-37, -5.29	T-1, 1.11
T-38, -1.64	T-6, -2.36

Mission capable rate:

T-37, 88.7%	T-1, 91.2%
T-38, 76.7%	T-6, 65.8%

Wing plans, trains for real-world actions



Commander's Corner

By Lt. Col. Eddy Stanfill

47th Flying Training Wing chief of plans and exercises

It is now old news that the 47th Flying Training Wing has taken on an increased role in support of today's war on terrorism.

Every day we see this wing's airmen deploy to remote locations supporting combatant commanders in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Recently, it was brought to my attention that more than 60 percent of my folks have been or will be deployed during the 18-month period from December 2002 to June of this year.

As the chief of wing plans and exercises, I am becoming more aware of what an important role we play in preparing our airmen for worldwide deployment.

The wing's plans and exercises office helps to prepare our airmen for contingency operations in three ways: planning and coordinating wing exercises, developing emergency-actions command post controllers, and ensuring wing and higher headquarters operations plans are developed and properly executed when needed.

We manage the base exercise evaluation team, or EET. Squadron commanders and agency chiefs appoint experts from their functional area as EET members for a minimum of one year.

The EET is charged to plan and execute realistic scenarios, evaluate unit capability

"Training and experience paid off this past fall when one of our own, while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, was the controller on duty during the enemy attack of an in-theater airfield. The airman's quick checklist actions and reports ... validated the quality of training she received."

to perform day-to-day and wartime skills, and provide feedback on areas for improvement so personnel are better prepared to perform their mission.

Exercises include major accident response to natural or man-made disasters, deployment processing of personnel and equipment, mutual aid to local emergency-response agencies, force protection condition scenarios, anti-hijacking and response to weapons of mass destruction.

Most recently the wing benefited from a combined deployment and contingency exercise in which personnel deployed to a simulated combat zone, trained and then practiced their self aid and buddy care techniques, defensive positioning, response to chemical warfare attacks and medical response to injured personnel.

Many of those who participated are now deployed to remote corners of the world, benefiting from the training they received just days prior to their deployment.

The wing's command post also has been deeply entrenched in supporting various worldwide missions.

During their day-to-day routine, control-

lers benefit from meticulous use of checklists, reporting of time-critical and sensitive information to higher headquarters and a 24/7 requirement to keep wing leadership informed of the current situation in and around Laughlin.

Training and experience paid off this past fall when one of our own, while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, was the controller on duty during the enemy attack of an in-theater airfield. The airman's quick checklist actions and reports to Central Command, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Military Command Center ensured the rapid diversion of aircraft, resulting in no aircraft being exposed to enemy fire. This result validated the quality of training she received.

In addition to exercise oversight and ensuring our command post controllers are prepared to perform their vital mission, wing plans and exercises is also responsible for developing and implementing operational plans.

These plans are implemented by the Crisis Action Team, or CAT. The CAT has representation from every functional area and is charged to respond at a moment's notice to coordinate wing efforts for a number of emergency actions.

Recent CAT actions have proven invaluable while determining force protection measures and responding to natural disaster and major accidents.

I am confident the exercise and training provided by my staff have helped the wing "train the way we fight" and, as the wing's mission statement indicates, successfully deploy expeditionary forces to fight and win America's wars ... period!

Border Eagle

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News for the Border Eagle should be submitted to the 47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 338, Laughlin AFB, TX, 298-5262. **Copy deadline is close of business each Thursday the week prior to publication.**

Advertising should be submitted to the Del Rio News-Herald, 2205 Bedell, Del Rio, TX, 774-4611. Advertising should be submitted by 4 p.m. each Friday.

Submissions can be e-mailed to: **timothy.stein@laughlin.af.mil** or **sheila.johnston@laughlin.af.mil**.

Seat belt saves master sergeant's life

By Master Sgt.
Karla Jordan-Hunnicutt
47th Medical Group first sergeant

A flash of a fast-moving white vehicle out of my peripheral view. Silence. Then, "Are you okay? Are you okay? I don't hear anything ... I think her leg's broken ... Her leg's in the steering wheel (In the steering wheel?) ... Ask her to move her leg... Can you move your leg? ... Well, it's not broken ... Do you know where you are? Do you know what happened?"

If you've ever been involved in an emergency situation you'll recognize that the aforementioned comments usually indicate that something bad has happened. A glance out of the rear of the ambulance confirmed my suspicions as I spotted my vehicle upside down on the pavement with a shattered windshield and evidence of impact on both sides.

What I thought would be a routine day changed in a matter of seconds. On Dec. 19 I left work at 6:02 p.m. and headed home in order to shower and change for my commander's open house that night. I made a right turn onto Bedell Avenue and almost immediately moved into the inside lane because, as many of you already know, stop signs are frequently mistaken for merge signs in the local commu-



Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Karla Jordan-Hunnicutt, 47th Medical Group first sergeant, received only a concussion and bruises from the accident that totaled her sport utility vehicle. Sergeant Jordan-Hunnicutt credits the vehicle's seat belt with saving her life.

nity. I caught a glimpse of a white car approaching from the right at a high rate of speed, and then everything went black.

I wasn't fully coherent until I arrived at the Val Verde Emergency Department. I had to find out the sequence of events from witness accounts and the police report. Reportedly, as I approached Austin Courts, the driver of a white Corsica ran the stop sign and "t-boned" my vehicle. This strike caused my vehicle to take flight and flip over onto its top. Once my vehicle landed, the rear end came to rest in the left lane of the oncoming traffic lane, where it was then struck by another vehicle on the left rear panel.

All of the well-wishers who came to the emergency room had a look of disbelief on their faces once they saw me. I guess they were amazed at my good condi-

tion following reports of the poor condition of my vehicle and the number of vehicles involved in the accident. One co-worker even commented that if it hadn't been for the bump over my eye and my mussed hair he wouldn't have known that I'd been involved in an accident at all.

Make no mistake, I believe God is responsible for my surviving this crash with merely a concussion and a couple of bruises. But, I'm also convinced that my seat belt was the tool that was used to ensure that minimal harm came to me. I'm always surprised when I see people without seat belts. It's an automatic reaction for me to fasten my seat belt once I get into my vehicle and insert the key in the ignition.

Ironically, my accident followed our holiday safety briefing and a time when our wing was still reeling from Staff Sgt. Derek Smith's fatal motor vehicle accident. I'm proud that I did all the things within my control to ensure that we wouldn't have to go through that pain again.

So, the next time you get in your car, forget about lighting the cigarette and forget about dialing the cell phone.

I'm sure that you're familiar with the adage "God helps those who help themselves." Help yourself – buckle up!



**Actionline
298-5351**

Col. Dan Woodward
47th Flying Training Wing commander

This column is one way to work through problems that haven't been

Handicapped parking at club

Question: On the north side of Club XL the handicapped

solved through normal channels. By leaving your name and phone number, you are assured of a timely personal reply. It's also very useful in case more information is needed in order to pursue your inquiry. If you give your name, we will make every attempt to ensure confidentiality when appropriate.

If your question relates to the general interest of the people of Laughlin, the question and answer may also be printed in the Border Eagle.

Before you call the Actionline,

parking sign on the pavement is worn off. It seems like just about everybody except handicapped people get to park there. Actually I think there should be two places on the north side of the club.

please try to work the problem out through the normal chain of command or directly with the base agency involved.

Thanks for your cooperation, and I look forward to reading some quality ideas and suggestions.

Below are some useful telephone numbers that may be helpful when working your issue with a base agency.

AAFES	298-3176
Finance	298-5204
Civil Engineer	298-5252
Civilian Personnel	298-5299

Answer: Thanks for bringing this to my attention. Temporary signs have been placed in two locations. The 47th Services Division has submitted a work order with the 47th Civil Engineer Squad-

Clinic	298-6311
Commissary	298-5815
Dormitory manager	298-5213
EEO	298-5879
FWA hotline	298-4170
Housing	298-5904
Information line	298-5201
Legal	298-5172
MEO	298-5400
Military Personnel	298-5073
Public Affairs	298-5988
Security Forces	298-5900
Services	298-5810

ron so the permanent signs will be posted in the near future.

Please feel free to contact the 47th Services Division at 298-5810 if you need more information.

Force, from page 1

in the total force, while allowing them increased stability and a chance to continue working toward a military retirement,” the general said.

Some applications may not be approved.

Because of manning shortages, 29 officer and 38 enlisted specialties will not qualify for many of the waivers. Among those are pilots, navigators, air battle managers, aerial gunners, fuels specialists, security forces, nurses and first sergeants. The complete list of “stressed” career fields that are excluded from many of the waivers is posted at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/retsep/shape.htm.

“We don’t want to break any career fields during our force-shaping efforts or create problems in future years similar to the ones caused by the downsizing in the early 1990s,” said General Spiegel.

“Approval authority for miscellaneous enlisted separations will rest at the personnel center, to centrally review applications and ensure compliance with manning needs,” said Maj. Dawn Keasley, chief of retirement and separation policy at the Air Staff.

Examples of efforts to “shape” the force go beyond waivers. They include

procedures where those who fail to complete technical schools only will be allowed to leave the Air Force or to reclassify into short-manned career fields. In addition, high-year-of-tenure extensions will only be granted to those in specific shortage career fields or for personal hardship reasons.

Program highlights include:

■ The chance to transfer to the Guard and Reserve for those with at least 24 months time in service, incurring a two-for-one service commitment (not less than one year or greater than six years).

■ Enlisted waivers of active-duty service commitments associated with technical training and bootstrap programs.

■ Potential service commitment waivers of up to 18 months for permanent-change-of-station moves.

■ Potential service commitment waivers for officers of up to 24 months for Air Force Institute of Technology doctoral education and Education With Industry.

■ Up to 12-month waiver of intermediate and senior developmental education commitments for officers.

■ Possibility of ROTC commissioning directly into the Reserve or Guard.

■ Aviator Continuation Pay, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences scholarships, and

AFIT fellowship, scholarship, and grant commitments will not be waived.

According to officials, force shaping is designed to return the Air Force to its authorized uniformed population, or “end strength,” while shifting some airmen to fill positions in specialties that need more people of their rank.

The Air Force brought in thousands of people since the late ’90s to build up to end strength, with limited consideration for the skill mix, officials said. But more people came into the service and fewer than expected left, leaving the force with more people than are authorized to be on active duty.

To reduce the total number of active-duty people in uniform, the Air Force is continuing efforts like retraining people into careers where they are needed more, outsourcing jobs to private industry and converting some jobs from military people to Air Force civilian workers.

However, these new force-shaping tools are being offered because still more needs to be done, officials said.

For more information, Laughlin people may call 2nd Lt. Sara Birnbaum at 298-5487 or the Air Force Contact Center at DSN 665-5000 or toll-free (800) 616-3775.

Newslines

Scholarship deadline looms

Wednesday is the deadline for the Defense Commissary Agency Scholarships for Military Children.

Applications can be picked up at the commissary or downloaded through a link on the front page of www.commissaries.com or www.militaryscholar.org.

Ribbon cutting scheduled

There will be a grand opening ceremony for the new visitor’s quarters Tuesday at 3:30 p.m. directly outside the new visitor quarters. Among the participants of the ribbon cutting ceremony are Rep. Henry Bonilla, Lt. Gen. John Hopper and other Air Force AETC services and Corps of Engineer personnel.

Black Heritage Banquet set

The annual Black Heritage Banquet is scheduled for 6 p.m. Feb. 28 at the Fiesta Center. The national theme for the 2004 observance is “Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas.”

The guest speaker is Brig. Gen. Leon A. Johnson, Air Education and Training Command mobilization assistant to the director of operations. The cost is \$15 for club members and \$18 for nonmembers. People must sign up by Feb. 20.

For more information or to sign up, contact Joni Jordan at 298-5914; Tech. Sgt. Lashinya Crivens at 298-5991; Tech. Sgt. Karen Lewis at 298-5607; or Master Sgt. Gerald Norris at 298-5992.

Claims briefing canceled

Due to schedule conflicts, the legal office claims briefing scheduled for 10 a.m. March 4 has been canceled.

The regular schedule for the claims briefing is 10 a.m. every Thursday at the legal office, Building 338.

For questions, call Tech. Sgt. Lesa Dutra at 298-5172.

Center helps with taxes

The Laughlin Tax Center encourages everyone to get a head start on tax preparation. People with an appointment with their squadron Volunteer Income Tax Assistance representative should bring all records with them, to include W-2s and 1099s.

For more information, call 298-4858.

Officer, enlisted excluded career fields

Officer: (Colonels handled on a case-by-case basis with headquarters AFSLMO/CA):

- 11XX All pilots
- 12XX All navigators
- 13BX Air battle manager
- 13DXA Control and recovery
- 42PX Clinical psychologist
- 43HX Public health
- 43PX Pharmacist
- 44AX Chief, hospital/clinic services
- 44BX Preventive medicine
- 44DX Pathologist
- 44EX Emergency services physician
- 44MX Internist
- 44NX Neurologist
- 44PX Psychiatrist
- 44RX Diagnostic radiologist
- 44SX Dermatologist
- 44TX Radiotherapist
- 44YX Critical care medicine
- 44ZX Allergist
- 45AX Anesthesiologist
- 45BX Orthopedic surgeon
- 45PX Physical medicine physician

- 45SX Surgeon
- 46XX Nurse utilization field
- 47XX Dental utilization field
- 48AX Aerospace medicine specialist
- 48RX Residency trained flight surgeon
- 48VX Pilot-physician
- 62EX Developmental engineering utilization field

Enlisted:

- 1A1XX Flight engineer
- 1A2XX Loadmaster
- 1A3XX Airborne communications and electrical systems
- 1A5XX Airborne mission systems
- 1A7XX Aerial gunner
- 1A8XX Airborne cryptologic linguist
- 1C1XX Air traffic control
- 1C2XX Combat control
- 1C3XX Command post
- 1C4XX Tactical air command and control
- 1C5XX Aerospace control and warning systems
- 1N0XX Intelligence applications

- 1N1XX Imagery analysis
- 1N3XX Cryptologic linguist
- 1N4XX Signals intelligence analysis
- 1N5XX Electronic signals intelligence exploitation
- 1N6XX Electronic system security assessment
- 1T0XX SERE operations
- 1T2XX Pararescue
- 3E7XX Fire protection
- 3E8XX Explosive ordnance disposal
- 3E9XX Readiness
- 3P0XX Security forces
- 4A0XX Health services management
- 4E0XX Public health
- 4N0XX Medical service
- 4Y0X2 Dental laboratory
- 7S0XX Special investigations
- 8B000 Military training instructor
- 8D000 Linguist debriefer
- 8F0XX First sergeant
- 8R000 Recruiter
- 9L000 Interpreter/translator



Photo by Airman 1st Class Timothy J. Stein

Many thanks...

Col. Dan Woodward, 47th Flying Training Wing commander, presents former Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Robert Gaylor with an XL belt buckle to thank him for his extensive community involvement and for speaking to Airman Leadership School Class 04-02 after a luncheon Tuesday.



Laughlin Salutes

Airman Leadership School Class 04-02
(all graduates are senior airmen)

- Mary Davenport, 47th Security Forces Squadron
- Ray Dunklin Jr., 47th Civil Engineer Squadron
- Ronnie Garcia, 47th SFS
- Deborah Garza: 47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron
- Douglas James, 47th Operations Support

- Squadron
- Michelle Kisner, 47th OSS
 - Michael Osburn, 47th CES
 - Stephanie Ryan, 47th OSS
 - Michlin Shumpert, 47th CES
 - Carrie Staugler, 47th Mission Support Group
 - Adam White, 47th OSS
 - Kathleen Williams: 47th OSS
 - Jeremy Wray, 47th CES

Reduction program deters, detects drug abuse

Compiled from
staff reports

Most people know the Drug Demand Reduction Program office as the place to go when they are selected for random urinalysis. Sometimes by being picked randomly, people could find themselves visiting more frequently than they would like.

“I was selected three times last month. Random – yeah right!”

“I know why they are testing me ... It’s because I’m just getting back from leave.”

These are just a couple of phrases the staff hears as personnel arrive at the program’s office, according to Anthony McKinney, Laughlin’s Drug Demand Reduction Program manager.

The primary responsibility of the Drug Demand Reduction Program is deterrence and detection of drug abuse for the Air Force and Department of Defense civilians. Air

Force Drug Testing Program software is used to randomly select the testing days and the percentage of personnel tested each month. This method is the standard and is used throughout the Air Force, said Mr. McKinney.

Commanders have several options for drug testing such as voluntary consent, probable cause, commander-directed, self-identification initial testing, valid medical purpose, and inspection testing. However, inspection testing is the most effective deterrent presently available against drug abuse, the program manager said. Commanders must consult the staff judge advocate when deciding the most appropriate drug testing method to be used for the situation.

The installation commander, who is responsible for the base drug-testing program, also has an appointed cross-functional oversight committee that meets quarterly to assess the status and effective-

ness of drug testing operations.

Managing the base drug-testing program is a full-time responsibility, said Mr. McKinney. However, the Drug Demand Reduction Program is also required to promote a drug-free environment through community involvement.

As an advocate for alcohol and drug abuse prevention and treatment, Mr. McKinney works closely with Tech. Sgt. Ralph Smith, the ADAPT Program NCO in charge. The program manager is the focal point for development of a network to support the goal of a drug-free community. Mr. McKinney actively participates in the base Integrated Delivery System, known here as Helping Us Grow Stronger. The HUGS committee meets monthly and reports to the wing commander through the Community Action Information Board.

Coordinating base de-

mand reduction outreach and education initiatives, the program manager works with other agencies to target those at greatest risk. A few of the outreach activities are Military Appreciation Day, Health and Wellness Fairs, Retiree Day and Air Force Family Day. In addition, Mr. McKinney makes an annual visit to the base youth center during Red Ribbon Week in October.

Last July, Laughlin also initiated the Drug Education for Youth program, focusing on children between 9 and 12 years old.

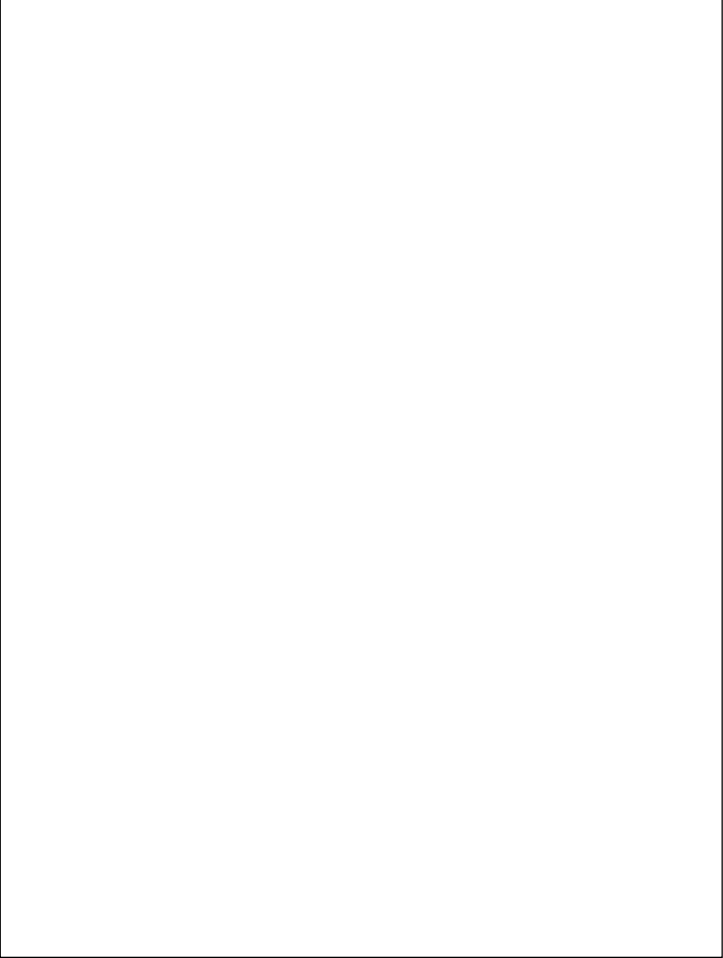
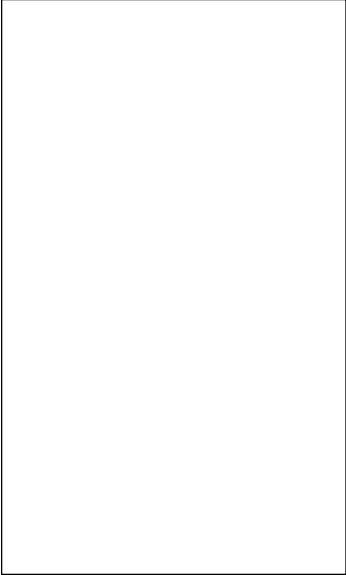
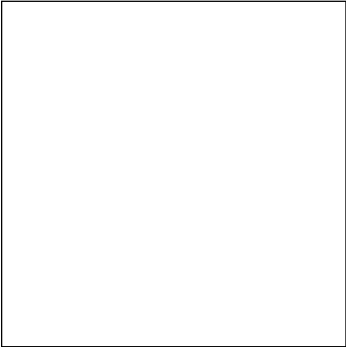
“This is a unique, comprehensive and multi-phased pro-

gram,” said Mr. McKinney. “DEFY strengthens protective factors and reduces risk factors that scientific research has directly linked to adolescent alcohol and drug abuse, school failure, delinquency and violence.”

The one-year program begins the first phase with a leadership camp, which lasts eight days. It is a classroom environment that teaches skills and training in leadership, team building, conflict resolution, goal setting and increasing self-confidence. Although the classroom is the focus, Mr.

See **Drugs**, page 10

2x7 Roberts jewelers



Chapel
information



Catholic

- Monday - Friday* ● Mass, 12:05 p.m.
- Saturday* ● Mass, 5 p.m., Reconciliation, 4:15 p.m. or by appointment
- Sunday* ● Mass, 9:30 a.m., Religious Education, 11 a.m.
- Thursday* ● Choir: 6 p.m., Rite of Christian Initiation, 7:30 p.m.

Protestant

- Wednesday* ● Choir, 7 p.m.; Protestant Women of the Chapel Ladies' Bible Study, 9 a.m.
- Sunday* ● General worship, 11 a.m., Contemporary worship, 9 a.m. in the base theater

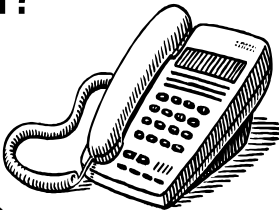
Chaplain Staff

- Wing chaplain:* Chap. (Lt. Col.) Joseph Lim, Roman Catholic
- Senior Protestant:* Chap. (Capt.) Terri Gast, Presbyterian Church, USA
- Protestant:* Chap. (Capt.) Alex Jack, Independent Christian Church
- Protestant:* Chap. (1st Lt.) Kenneth Fisher, Evangelical Church Alliance

For more information on other denominations, chapel events or services, call 298-5111. For information on special events, see the Community Calendar on page 16.

Need the latest Laughlin
information?

Call Laughlin's
Information Line
at 298-5201.



DoD overhauls civilian personnel system

By Tech. Sgt. David Jablonski
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON – The Air Force has formed a team to implement the Defense Department’s most dramatic civilian personnel system transformation in the last 50 years.

The National Security Personnel System gives DOD managers the flexibility to place civilian workers where they are needed most, without delay. It reduces the time it takes to hire new people, introduces pay-for-performance bonuses and streamlines the promotion process.

NSPS became reality for the Defense Department when President George W. Bush signed the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act on Nov. 24. The president called the legislation “transformational.

“This bill also advances the vital work of transforming the personnel system for civilian defense workers so we can put the right person in the right job to meet the challenges we face,” he said.

Maj. Gen. John M. Spiegel, Air Force director of personnel policy, said he is confident the system can meet the service’s future needs.

“We can successfully shape a flexible and responsive civilian personnel system to meet our needs for the 21st century,” he said.

The implementation will be extremely challenging and workload intensive, General Spiegel said.

“These will be exciting times,” he said. “But the road to success will be filled with many speed bumps, and to overcome those bumps we need to ensure clear lines of communication with our civilian workforce as we transition to this new system.”

To do that, the Air Force NSPS staff plans to establish e-mail updates tailored to civilian personnel staffs, video-teleconferences to capture the most pressing issues and find appropriate solutions, and a Web site to post the latest information for employees and managers.

“DOD will provide the basic information for training on NSPS. It will be [the] Air Force’s responsibility to ensure that every single one of our 160,000 civilian employees, all military and civilian supervisors and man-

agers, and our senior leaders and commanders are trained on the new personnel authorities and procedures,” said Sarah Bonilla, director of the Air Force NSPS implementation team. “This will entail a significant effort that will rely on our local civilian personnel flight staffs. The CPF staffs will receive extensive training in the new system so they will not only be prepared to implement NSPS, but train their base population.”

Ms. Bonilla has begun to hire her team and set initial goals.

“I am in the process of hiring some of the very best personnelists the Air Force has to offer, so we can begin developing the education and training material needed to implement NSPS,” she said. “This is a huge task, as we will need to touch almost everyone in the Air Force: civilians, active duty, guard, Reserve, commanders, supervisors and managers.

The initial goal is to ensure everyone in the Air Force is trained on and understands the new personnel authorities and programs, she said.

“We are talking about some radical changes to civilian personnel administration — replacing a system that all of us have grown up with, with a system that offers more flexibility and rewards, but also puts more at risk,” she said. “We have to build a marketing and training program that is deliverable to every employee, commander and supervisor in an easy to understand format.”

But Ms. Bonilla said that the civilian personnel community would meet the challenges this new system presents.

“While we are still assessing the impact of NSPS on the personnel community, we do foresee some changes,” she said. “NSPS will free our Air Force civilian personnelists from the perception that they are the ‘cop’ or ‘bad guy’ of the personnel system. Because NSPS delegates considerable personnel and fiscal authority to supervisors and managers, many personnelists will move into an expanded role of adviser to management. They will become indispensable players on management’s team providing insight and guidance on implementation of the NSPS’s flexibilities.”

Ms. Bonilla also said she envisions

a change in the skill sets of personnel specialists under NSPS. Pay-for-performance, pay banding and a simplified classification system may require different levels or combinations of knowledge and experiences that are required today.

The most dramatic changes will be in classification and performance management. Pay banding will replace the traditional general and wage schedule grades. This is expected to greatly simplify the classification of positions as there will be much less need to identify specific differences in duties. The result should be streamlined position descriptions that should not exceed one page. Under NSPS, the performance management system becomes pay-for-performance; employees will be compensated based on their contribution to the mission of their organization.

NSPS will also allow more com-

petitive hiring and more options for current employees.

“For example, one of the really great things about NSPS is that we can actually give an employee a small pay increase if (he or she is) reassigned to a tougher or bigger job,” Ms. Bonilla said. “We can’t do that today.”

While there are many changes to the personnel system, some “very important safeguards” will remain the same. Employees will retain all the protections they currently have; merit system principles, rules against prohibited personnel practices, anti-discrimination laws, ability to join unions, appeal rights, etc. Leave and attendance, retirement, benefits, safety and drug abuse programs and some other things have not changed.

Until the Air Force site becomes available, people can learn more about NSPS at the Defense Department level by visiting www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/.

Deployed airmen getting ATM access

By Capt. Kelley Thibodeau
*379th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs*

SOUTHWEST ASIA – An officer deployed to a forward location here has developed a template for an automated teller machine agreement that will place ATMs at selected locations in the region. The first two ATMs are due to be installed in mid-February.

“Major [Scott] Lettney created the first operating agreement for the U.S. Air Force for this type of initiative,” said Maj. Steve Minkin, 379th Expeditionary Comptroller Squadron commander.

The operating agreement will be used as the template for future initiatives of this nature, Major Minkin said.

Currently, most people deployed to Southwest Asia cash checks for U.S. dollars or a host nation’s currency. If someone deploys without checks, he or she may

have to use a pay advance to get cash. Pay advances are restricted to \$100 and may affect a person’s base pay for several months after the advance.

Major Minkin and the 379th ECPTS cashiers said they expect a significant drop in check-cashing needs once the ATM machines are installed and running.

“The initiative gives us an opportunity to look at the manning of the cashiers in the comptroller squadron and see if some positions can be reduced, allowing more people to be at home station,” Major Minkin said.

The ATM agreement was approved for implementation by the Central Command Air Forces comptroller and judge advocate, Central Command comptroller, Air Combat Command comptroller, representatives of the U.S. State Department and the secretary of the Air Force’s comptroller banking liaison office.

Tricare eliminates approval requirements to receive standard civilian inpatient care

Compiled from a Tricare news release

WASHINGTON— People covered by the Tricare Standard military health care plan no longer need approval from their military treatment facility to seek inpatient care at civilian hospitals.

The need to get a nonavailability statement before seeking civilian inpatient care expired Dec. 28 under a provision of the 2002 National Defense Authorization Act. A nonavailability statement indicates that care is not available from the military facility and authorizes care at a civilian facility.

An exception in the law continues the requirement for Tricare Standard beneficiaries to get a nonavailability statement before seeking nonemergency inpatient mental health care services. However, officials said, this applies only to beneficiaries who use Tricare Standard or Extra, who are not Medicare eligible, and who have no other health in-

surance that is primary to Tricare. Department of Defense officials do not require preauthorization for Tricare beneficiary inpatient mental health care when Medicare is the primary payer.

“With this change in policy, beneficiaries now have the freedom to choose a military treatment facility or a civilian facility, without any extra paperwork,” said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. “However, I urge Tricare beneficiaries to still look to the military health system as their first choice for health care because I believe the services we offer are second to none.”

A military treatment facility may request a departmental waiver of the new policy in certain specific, but limited, circumstances. But those requests do not apply to maternity services, unless the affected beneficiary began her first prenatal visit before Dec. 28, officials said.

Any military treatment fa-

cility granted a waiver must publish a notice in the Federal Register that a nonavailability statement is required for a certain procedure. Officials at the treatment facility, the services and the Tricare Management Activity will notify the affected beneficiaries if this occurs, officials said. Maternity patients should check with their local military treatment facility to compare maternity services there with those available in civilian facilities, said Military Health System officials.

A recently implemented “Family-Centered Care” program offers enhanced services

and recognizes the unique needs of military families in today’s climate of increasing deployments and high operations tempo, officials said. Beneficiaries can review the enhanced military treatment facility maternity services online and with their military medical care provider.

Beneficiaries can check the Tricare Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil if they are seeking an inpatient service and want to know if their nearby military treatment facility applied for a nonavailability statement waiver. They also may con-

tact the beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator or health benefits adviser at their nearest treatment facility, officials said.

Before seeking care at a civilian facility, military health system officials urge beneficiaries to check with their nearby military treatment facility to compare services and ask questions.

Even if the facility could not provide the needed services in the past, the facility’s staffing levels or capabilities may have changed, and they might now be available, officials said.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Wolfe

Ka-boom...
Explosions rock the ground as Army engineers and Air Force explosive ordnance disposal workers detonate a weapons cache Feb. 5 at Al Fathah Air Field, Iraq. An estimated 2 million net pounds of explosives were left at the air field by the old regime.

Drugs, from page 6

McKinney said leadership camps are structured to provide a fun environment that allows the maximum focused quality training time while still permitting a relaxed, but organized and memorable experience.

Participants follow up with mentoring in the second phase and end with parent engagement and outplacement. Youth can only participate once unless they are selected to be a junior mentor. Enrollment for DEFY 2004 begins in March.

“There is no way we could conduct the DEFY program without great volunteer support,” said Mr. McKinney. “Volunteers are the backbone of the program. They bring a wealth of knowledge, training and expertise to the staff.”

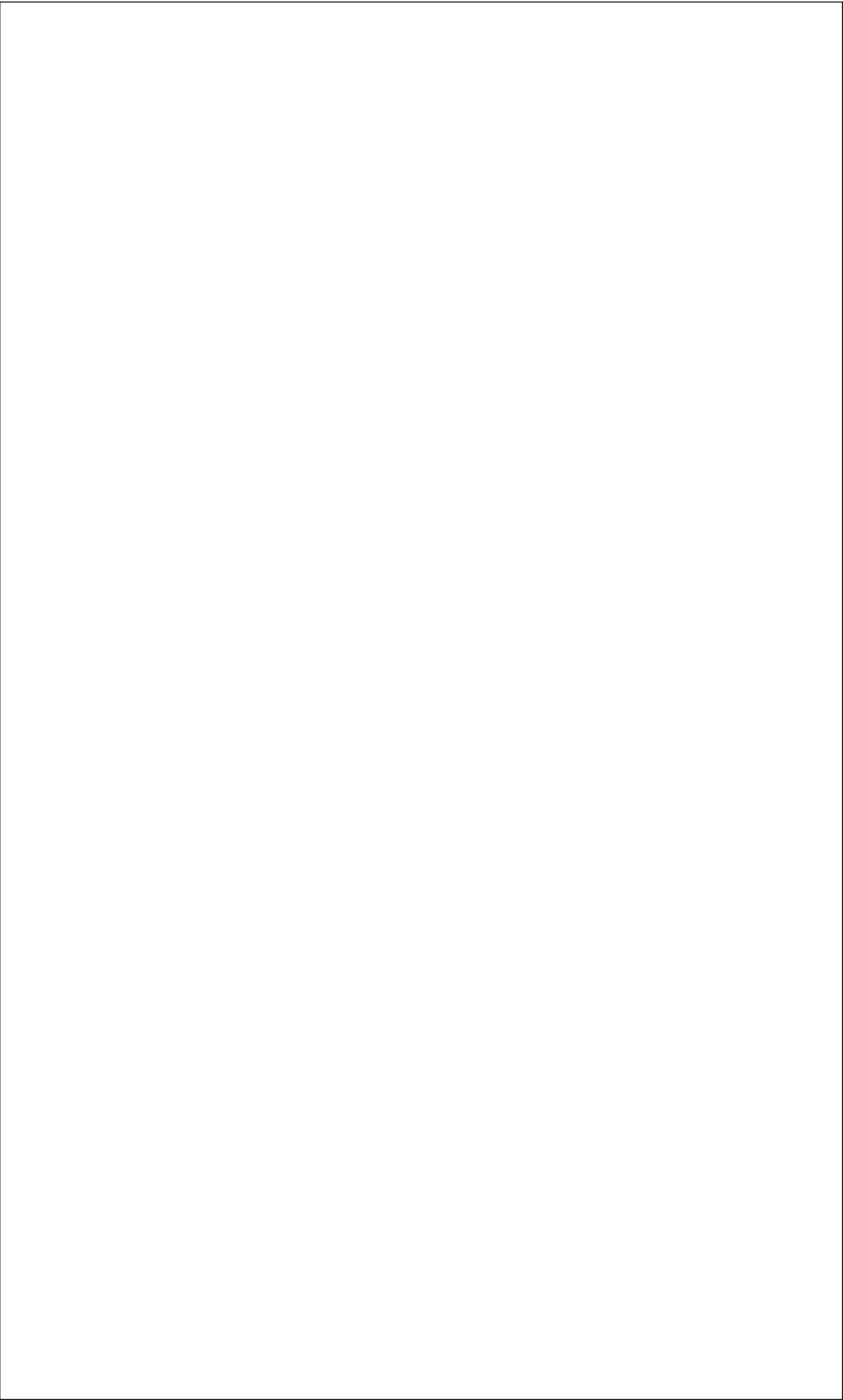
The Drug Demand Reduction Program is a very im-

portant part of Team XL, said Mr. McKinney. “Not only does the drug-testing program have a full-time mission to detect and deter illicit drug use, but the prevention and outreach program, DEFY, encourages healthy alternatives for our youth,” he said.

Active-duty military members, Department of Defense civilians, retirees and their dependents can volunteer for DEFY. People who want to become full-time volunteers with DEFY can pick up prevention literature to discuss at their next staff meeting or at home at the dinner table.

“No matter how involved you would like to become, your contribution to a drug-free Laughlin is invaluable as a member of Team XL,” Mr. McKinney stressed.

For more information about the overall program or volunteering, call 298-6495.



Air traffic controllers busy ‘pushing tin’

By Tech. Sgt. Anthony Hill
Public affairs

A steady flow of aircraft take off from the runways here, dotting the skies above Laughlin as student pilots carry out their routine training sorties.

An average of 300 flights are launched throughout a flying training day. As a result, traffic on the airfield and in the sky can get quite busy.

Coordinating that traffic is a team of skilled air traffic controllers located in the control tower and radar approach control room alongside the flight line. Pilots depend on the controllers to ensure flight safety and provide accurate instructions during takeoff, flying and landing.

“Our primary role is to support the flying training mission here, ensuring pilots get all of their sorties every day,” said Capt. Eric Shafa, 47th Operations Support Squadron airfield operations flight commander. “It’s our job to make sure the mission [is successful] in training the best pilots in the world.”

The control tower staff monitors air traffic within the local airfield environment, a five-mile radius around the base. The tower operates with a watch supervisor, flight data monitor, ground controller, local controller and a supervisor of flying. This team controls aircraft on the ground and during takeoff and landing.

“The job is challenging and rewarding,” said Tech. Sgt. Julie Nicolas, a watch supervisor in the tower. “You never know what type of day you’ll have. Depending on any number of factors, such as weather or emergencies, you can have hours of boredom separated by minutes of madness.”

Once aircraft are launched into their training patterns, the RAPCON team takes control of the flights. Controllers assigned in the radar approach control room monitor and control flights within an 85-mile radius of the base. They also provide support to civilian aircraft that fly within the air space or pass through here.

Airman 1st Class Paul Ocenak, a controller who works in the RAPCON, said his greatest satisfaction is going home at night knowing all flights made it where they were going and returned to the ground safely.

“I love my job,” he said. “But, it’s exhausting, mentally and physically. You must be confident in what you’re doing and use common sense and good situational awareness [because] things can happen so quickly.”

Controllers keep up with work that is full of activity as Laughlin is considered the third busiest airfield in the Air Force, according to Captain Shafa. More than 309,000 flying operations were conducted here last year. The flight commander pointed out that every year the Air Force Flight Standards Agency publishes the number of operations each base completes.

“Based on our number of operations and those published for civilian airports by the Federal Aviation Administration, we fall into the [top five] busiest airfields in the world,” he said.

Training is one element controllers use to ensure the job gets done correctly and to help achieve the mission.

“Air traffic control is one of the most important functions on base,” said Senior Airman Robert Garza, an air traffic control trainer assigned here the past four years. “Trainees have a large amount [of tasks] to handle. They must be able to multitask very well [because] the pace is busy and a lot of things can go on at one time.”

Laughlin is over 300 percent manned in apprentice controllers, according to Captain Shafa.

“We consider ourselves an Air Force training factory,” he said. “Since it takes so long for controllers to get fully rated (qualified), they’ll get tasked with a remote tour and we lose them. We have a very intense training environment. We rated 25 percent more controllers last year than in past years.”

The captain added that if apprentices are able to go through a training program here and get rated, they

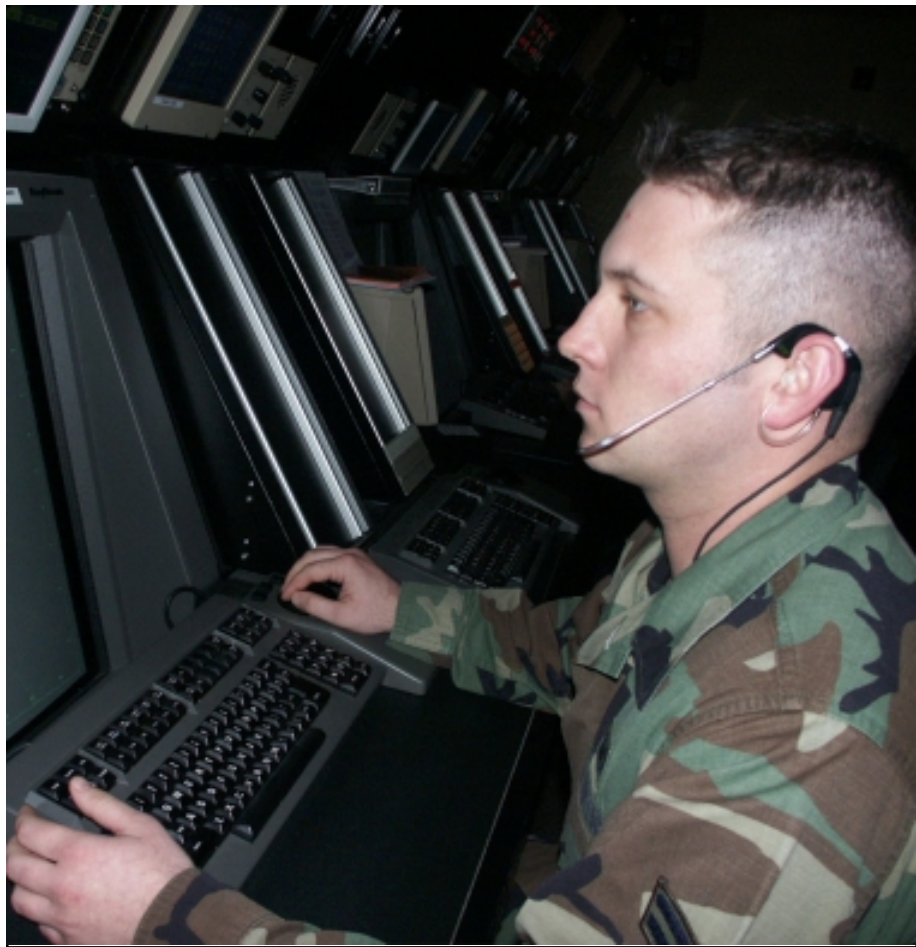


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Anthony Hill

Airman 1st Class Paul Ocenak, 47th Operations Support Squadron air traffic controller, who works in the radar approach control room, can monitor as many as 20 aircraft at one time.

could probably work as a controller at any base in the Air Force because of the operation tempo here.

“They will take this experience and have a leg up on training,” said Airman Garza. “It could also help them take less time to complete their upgrade training.”

People take the training extremely seriously here, said Tech. Sgt. George Nicolas, RAPCON crew chief and shift supervisor.

“Laughlin is always in the spotlight,” he said. “We produce [40] percent of all Air Force pilots. Apprentices here see how their actions affect pilots just by simple control instructions.”

The crew chief said it’s great to see controllers grow from young airmen to supervisors as they mature and get stronger. “We teach them how to be a controller, deal with pilots and stay professional,” he added.

Being part of an organization that claims “Always Professional” as

its unofficial motto, Sergeant Nicolas said it starts with the leadership. “Our leadership cares about the people and the mission,” he said. “They are professional and we try to emulate [that].”

Captain Shafa emphasized his support for the controllers, whether they work their day-to-day pace here or deploy to support the war on terrorism.

“I can’t give enough credit to the controllers,” he said. “Everyone from the top down is dedicated to providing the best service possible to the wing and [deployments].”

The captain said he constantly gets feedback from deployed units and the local area about how professional his people are, how hard they work and the service they provide.

“[Controllers] are here when the first jet launches until the last jet comes back,” he said. “Their impact on the mission is critical for making it happen every day.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Verlin Levi Collins

Tower of power...

BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Iraq — Maj. Jon Petruzzi (left) and Staff Sgt. Jason Bulgin climb a 120-foot-tall radio tower at Baghdad International Airport, Iraq. Major Petruzzi is commander of the Expeditionary Communications Squadron, and Sergeant Bulgin is a cable antenna maintenance specialist with the squadron.

The *XLer*

2nd Lt. Tracy Minkley
47th Contracting Squadron

Hometown: Carlsbad, N.M.

Family: Husband

Time at Laughlin:

One year, eight months

Time in service:

One year, eight months

Greatest accomplishment:

I can't say I have had a "greatest accomplishment."

I have a couple of mini accomplishments, though.

Hobbies: Soccer, snowboarding and running

Bad habit: Leaving wet towels on the floor and not closing the toothpaste cap (according to my husband)

Favorite movie:

"Dumb and Dumber"

Favorite band:

Finger-Eleven and Stained

If you could spend one hour with any person, who would it be? The author,

Ayn Rand



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Anthony Hill

Baby-bottle tooth decay preventable

Courtesy of the 47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron

It's common among parents to give their baby a bottle of milk, fruit juice or sweetened liquids when the baby gets really fussy. It's also common to give the baby a bottle during naptime and bedtime.

By practicing these habits it can cause your baby's teeth to decay – known as baby-bottle tooth decay or nursing bottle tooth decay, said Capt. (Dr.) Mark Halverson, 47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron.

Baby-bottle tooth decay often occurs in the upper front teeth, however, other teeth can also be involved, said Dr. Halverson. BBTD usually occurs when teeth are exposed to sweetened liquids for prolonged periods of time.

The sugars in sweet liquids serve as food for bacteria present in the baby's mouth. Once utilized, the bacteria will then produce this sticky acid substance, also known as plaque, which attacks the teeth. Such liquids may include milk, formula and fruit juices.

Every time the teeth are exposed to these liquids, they are exposed for at least 20 minutes to an acid attack. Studies have shown that it takes at least 40 minutes for the acid in the mouth to be neutralized by saliva.

In addition to the type of liquid put in the baby's mouth, frequency of expo-

sure to these liquids plays a role, said Dr. Halverson. The frequency and length of exposure babies receive, increases the chances for decay.

Decay can occur as soon as teeth appear in the mouth, he said. Sometimes by the time decay is noticed, it may be too late to save the teeth.

Here are a few tips for preventing BBTD:

■ After each feeding, wipe the baby's gums with a clean, damp washcloth or gauze pad. As soon as the first tooth erupts, start brushing. Clean and massage gums in areas that remain toothless, and begin flossing when all the baby teeth have erupted, usually 2 to 2 1/2 years of age.

■ Don't allow a child to sleep with a bottle containing milk, formula or any sweetened liquid.

■ If the child needs a comforter between feedings and or naptimes, give the child a bottle of cool water or a clean pacifier recommended by a dentist or physician. Do not dip the pacifier in any type of sweet liquid.

■ Do not fill the baby or child's bottle with sugar water or soda.

■ If local water does not have fluoride, ask a dentist if the child needs supplemental fluoride treatment.

■ Start dental visits by the child's first birthday. Make these visits regular. If dental problems occur, take a to the dentist as soon as possible.



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ONLINE news

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